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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [UP](#) [RS](#) [BO](#) [GM](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#)
SUBJECT: EUR DAS MERKEL,S JULY 1 MEETING WITH UKRAINE
FOREIGN MINISTER OGRYZKO

Classified By: EUR/ACE Kerem Bilge, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On the margins of the Batumi GUAM Summit, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Ogryzko told EUR DAS Merkel that the most important factors affecting Ukraine,s NATO aspirations are Germany and Russia. The Foreign Minister said that Ukraine is trying to work with Russia but will not accept a Russian veto on Ukrainian membership in NATO, adding that Ukraine saw itself staying in MAP status for only two or three years. The Foreign Minister reiterated that President Yushchenko wants to reach out to Belarus. DAS Merkel urged Ukraine to proceed with an internal education campaign on NATO to build public support that would also influence Germany and said that while Russia,s legitimate concerns should be addressed, the United States will not be deflected from the decision at Bucharest. DAS Merkel also cautioned the Foreign Minister on the wisdom of engaging Belarus given the low probability of follow-through. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) On July 1, EUR DAS David Merkel met with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Volodymyr Ogryzko. The meeting took place on the margins of the GUAM Summit in Batumi, Georgia. The Foreign Minister was accompanied by the Ukrainian Ambassador to Georgia and two other diplomats. DAS Merkel was accompanied by U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John Tefft, EUR/ACE Kerem Bilge, and Emboffs from Embassy Tbilisi.

GERMANY, RUSSIA, UKRAINE

¶3. (C) Foreign Minister Ogryzko began by raising the issue of NATO MAP for Ukraine. There are two important factors affecting the issue, he said: Germany and Russia. With Germany, Ukraine is developing a concrete plan of action for engagement. Chancellor Merkel will visit Ukraine soon and meet with the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament and the opposition. However, Ogryzko does not see the signals from Germany as promising. The German position, he said with slight irritation, &is not quite outrageous but not far from that.8 Ukraine is continuing its dialogue with Russia and has asked the Russians for a &clear picture8 of their objections, but so far has received no response. Ogryzko added that he would be traveling to France soon and that the French position had moved in Ukraine,s direction since the Bucharest Summit. Debate on NATO was ongoing in Ukraine, and anti-NATO demonstrations were part of that same democractic process. Unfortunately, Germany and Russia remain the two major negative factors.

¶4. (C) DAS Merkel responded that Germany and the United States had a difference of opinion on MAP. In the U.S. view, the political decision to offer Ukraine membership in NATO had been made at Bucharest) MAP is simply a technical issue. Germany &chooses to see8 MAP as the final hurdle before membership, which it is not. MAP is a technical program to improve a country,s capabilities so it can

effectively exercise membership. The Russian factor is of a different order, however. For the Russians, Georgia joining NATO would be an irritant,⁸ but Ukrainian membership would be a body blow.⁸ Ukraine should not underestimate what Prime Minister Putin is telling the Germans. DAS Merkel added that it is necessary to think about what steps will be taken to address Russia's legitimate concerns. Looking back on previous rounds of NATO enlargement, he said, every time new members have been admitted NATO has also taken a step towards Russia, such as creation of the NATO-Russia Council. Clarity is important, said DAS Merkel. During the first round of enlargement, Russia got the idea that it could affect the outcome, and was disappointed when it could not. By contrast, during the second round of enlargement, the Russians were told that their legitimate concerns would be addressed but that the ultimate goal of enlargement would not be deflected.

15. (C) Ogryzko said that he feels the Russians are trying to play out⁸ the German Chancellor. The German attitude is to have MAP, but without the M.⁸ Ukraine wants to involve Russia, he said, to show them what Ukraine's NATO ambitions are really about) &we are not against you, we want to be with you.⁸ He suggested including Russia in the upcoming COMMON ENDEAVOR exercise. The problem, he said, is that Russia thinks it has a right to say no to Ukraine's membership in NATO when in reality they don't. If they did, he asked rhetorically, what would be the point of NATO? Ukraine wants dialogue with Russia, but has only been able to establish five bilateral working groups with Moscow, while it has nineteen with NATO. Ogryzko said he was consulting with Slovakia and other countries that have completed the NATO accession process. He noted that Russia is one of the so-called⁸ guarantors of Ukraine's security, but this, along with fantastical⁸ statements from the Bucharest Summit, is not enough⁸ for Ukraine's security.

16. (C) DAS Merkel noted that Slovak Foreign Minister Jan Kubis is a good person to talk to on these issues as he has a good understanding of Russia. The issue with the Germans is that they question whether Ukraine still has a good case for entering NATO, he said) and the Chancellor's visit will be an opportunity to address this. France has its concerns too, he added, but France also feels it has more leverage with Russia than Germany does.

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

17. (C) DAS Merkel also stressed the importance of getting the support of leading Ukrainian political actors such as the Prime Minister and engaging the public. This round of enlargement is a bigger challenge than the first two) given Afghanistan and other issues, NATO is being seen again as an operational military alliance in addition to being a values-based organization. The public campaign should discuss both aspects of NATO, DAS Merkel advised. Better public understanding of NATO in Ukraine and concomitant greater public support would help with the German factor, he added, since the Germans take the line that having 50 percent plus one⁸ of Ukrainians in favor of NATO is not good enough.

18. (C) Ogryzko said that a public education campaign is already underway. He estimated that about 30 percent of the population are vehemently opposed to NATO membership while 26-29 percent are strongly in favor. The question, he said, is how to win over the remaining population. Ukraine had discussed the issue of public education campaigns with Slovakia and other nations that had joined NATO recently. He said that Ukraine's anticipates being in MAP status for only two or three years, arguing that Ukraine's military is pretty close to NATO standard already and Ukraine is meeting NATO standards on elections and press freedom. &Yes, we have Communists in our parliament, but that's democracy,⁸ he said. Ukraine is a large, influential country that can do much⁸ for NATO and be an exporter, not an importer of

security. He added that the MFA is working well with the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv and praised the work of Ambassador Taylor.

BELARUS

19. (C) DAS Merkel raised the issue of President Yuschenko,s proposed meeting with President Lukashenko of Belarus. He said the United States understands that as a neighboring country, Ukraine has legitimate concerns, but warned that any meeting would draw criticism from the West. In response, Ogryzko said that as the United States is Ukraine,s advocate with NATO, perhaps Ukraine can be America,s advocate with Belarus. In any meeting, he said, President Yuschenko is committed to telling Lukashenko the truth about the internal situation in Belarus, advocating the release of political prisoners and urging a free press and access for OSCE election observers. The Foreign Minister also noted that Belarus has not ratified its border demarcation agreement with Ukraine. Lukashenko decides everything in Belarus and &if we don,t speak to him, it,s just monkey business.⁸ DAS Merkel agreed that the message has value but cautioned that follow-through would be difficult to achieve.
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